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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1666 (2006) of 31 March 2006, by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 October 2006. It provides an update of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia since my report of 26 June 2006 (S/2006/435).

2. My Special Representative for Georgia, Heidi Tagliavini, who had led UNOMIG since July 2002, continued to head the Mission until 15 July 2006. She was succeeded by Jean Arnault, who assumed his duties on 17 August 2006. In the interim period, UNOMIG was led by my Deputy Special Representative, Ivo Petrov. The Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak (Pakistan), continued to assist my Special Representative and Deputy throughout the reporting period. The strength of UNOMIG on 26 September 2006 stood at 121 military observers and 12 civilian police officers (see annex).

II. Political process

3. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued its efforts to maintain stability, prevent escalation of tensions and facilitate dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on the three substantive areas endorsed by the United Nations-chaired high-level meetings of the Group of Friends in Geneva (see S/2004/315, paras. 5-7) and the Sochi agreements between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Georgia (see S/2003/412, para. 5). The key objective remained to strengthen confidence between the sides by addressing practical issues of concern, thus facilitating meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, taking into account the principles contained in the document entitled "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" and its transmittal letter (see S/2002/88, para. 3) and additional ideas of the sides.

4. Following the resumption of the Coordinating Council on 15 May (see S/2006/435, para. 5), on 30 June my Deputy Special Representative chaired the first session of the resumed Working Group I on security matters, at which the Georgian and Abkhaz sides tasked their regional coordinators with preparing a plan of action

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for combating crime and building trust in the zone of conflict. On 11 July my Deputy Special Representative also chaired the first session of the resumed Working Group II on the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. At the meeting, the sides exchanged views on issues related to the dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees, in the first instance to the Gali district, and outlined their approaches on how to improve the situation in the district. They agreed to recommend participation of their respective authorized representatives on educational issues at the next session and to continue discussions on the verification of returnees to the Gali district. The two meetings took place against the background of Abkhaz objections to the composition of the Georgian delegations to the Coordinating Council and its working groups, which resulted in several delays before the meetings could be held.

5. On 18 July, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a resolution calling on the Government to start procedures for the immediate suspension of the peacekeeping operations in Georgia and to request the immediate withdrawal of the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation from the territory of Georgia. It also requested the Government to start working immediately on a change of the peacekeeping format and the deployment of international police forces in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and to inform the international community of its plans for the peaceful resolution of the conflicts. The resolution followed two previous resolutions (see S/2005/657, para. 13 and S/2006/173, para. 9) calling for the replacement of the current peacekeeping forces, but it did not establish an implementation deadline. The resolution prompted negative reactions from the Abkhaz side which stated that a withdrawal of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would lead to an escalation of tensions followed by a resumption of hostilities. Throughout the reporting period, it reiterated its adamant opposition to any change in the negotiation and peacekeeping mechanisms. By early September, the Government of Georgia insisted that new momentum could be given to the settlement process only through amendments to the peace process mechanisms involving, in particular, broader international participation in the peacekeeping force. On 22 September, President Saakashvili presented Georgia's proposals on the resolution of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia. They included the demilitarization of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, direct dialogue between the parties, the establishment of an international police presence followed by the signing of a comprehensive pledge on the non-use of force, and economic rehabilitation.

6. Relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides took a turn for the worse when, in the early morning of 25 July, a large-scale special operation was launched in the Georgian-controlled upper Kodori Valley under the direction of the Ministers of Internal Affairs and Defence of Georgia, the stated objective of which was to restore law and order in the area. The Government of Georgia had provided advance notice, however without detail, to the Abkhaz side of an impending operation. The Abkhaz side declared the operation a gross violation of the 1994 Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces aimed at taking over a strategically important bridgehead for the further build-up of the Georgian military presence. It put its forces on high alert, deployed military units just outside the Abkhaz-controlled lower part of the Kodori Valley and threatened retaliation in the event of an incursion by the Georgian side into the lower part of the valley. The Government of Georgia stressed that the forces involved in the operation belonged

to the Ministry of the Interior or were military assets on loan to the Ministry of Interior, that it was conducting not a military but a law enforcement operation against a defiant local armed group, and that the operation would not spill over into Abkhaz-controlled territory. Misgivings persisted, however, as the Chairman of the Defence and Security Committee of the Georgian Parliament stated publicly that the operation would also establish control over an "extremely important strategic base ... a place from which one can reach Sukhumi by air in just five minutes".

7. In the absence of the monitoring by UNOMIG of the upper Kodori Valley, which had been suspended since the hostage-taking incident in June 2003, the Mission was unable to verify the situation there. In an effort, however, to provide some measure of transparency, on 27 and 28 July, UNOMIG established two temporary observation posts in the vicinity of two checkpoints of the CIS peacekeeping force to monitor movement to and from the upper Kodori Valley on a 24-hour basis. At the time of the writing of the present report, UNOMIG had issued 13 violation reports of the 1994 Moscow Agreement to the Georgian side relating to the introduction of troops, military vehicles and aircraft into the security zone and obstruction of the freedom of movement of UNOMIG personnel. During the same period, two violation reports were issued to the Abkhaz side for obstruction of the freedom of movement of the Mission's personnel (see para. 19 below).

8. On 27 July, President Saakashvili announced the completion of the special operation and the relocation of the Tbilisi-based Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia to the upper Kodori Valley, a decision that he described as a first important step towards extending Georgia's jurisdiction in the region. He also declared the start of a major infrastructure and social rehabilitation programme in the upper valley. In response, the Abkhaz side stated that it would oppose, even by force, such a relocation. It also announced that it had the support of the North Caucasus republics of the Russian Federation, including in the form of volunteers. It is relevant, in this respect, to recall that the introduction of volunteer formations from beyond the frontiers of Abkhazia, Georgia, would be in breach of the 1994 Moscow Agreement.

9. Throughout this tense period, my Deputy Special Representative was in constant contact with the sides in order to avoid the escalation of the situation. To this end, while the special operation was ongoing, he made two attempts to convene an extraordinary quadripartite meeting and the scheduled Coordinating Council session, but to no avail. UNOMIG also facilitated a visit to Sukhumi by the Coordinator of the Tbilisi-based Group of Friends who, following a meeting with the Georgian authorities, met with the Abkhaz side and the Commander of the CIS peacekeeping force. The Group of Friends urged both sides, inter alia, to take steps to de-escalate the situation, pursue confidence-building and transparency, and continue their negotiations under existing formats.

10. Upon completion of the operation, the Government of Georgia announced its readiness to provide, as of 20 August, security guarantees for the resumption of monitoring of the upper Kodori Valley by the United Nations. To that end, in accordance with Security Council resolutions and the 2 April 2002 protocol, in which the sides had agreed on regular joint patrols of the Kodori Valley by UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force (see S/2002/469, para. 11), UNOMIG requested security guarantees for a joint patrol. While the Government of Georgia offered UNOMIG the necessary security guarantees, it considered the presence of

the CIS peacekeeping force . . the upper Kodori Valley to be inappropriate based on its view that the Kodori Valley is not part of the security zone as well as what it described as residual hostility of the local population towards the CIS peacekeeping force following the latter's 12 April 2002 operation in that area (see S/2002/469, para. 13). For its part, the Abkhaz side announced that in the event that the CIS peacekeeping force was prevented from monitoring the upper Kodori Valley, all international movement to and through the lower Kodori Valley would be suspended. UNOMIG continues to be guided by agreements between the parties and relevant Security Council resolutions. At the same time, the Mission stresses that independent verification of the situation in the Kodori Valley is overdue and hopes that the parties will reach agreement on this issue.

11. On 9 September, UNOMIG facilitated a visit to Sukhumi by Merab Antadze, who on 24 July had succeeded Giorgi Khaindrava as the State Minister for Conflict Resolution of Georgia. Under the auspices of my Special Representative, he held his first direct exchanges in this capacity with the Abkhaz de facto Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergei Shamba.

12. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, visited Georgia from 18 to 20 August 2006, including Sukhumi, Gali and Zugdidi. He met with the highest leadership in Tbilisi and Sukhumi, encouraging both to alleviate the suffering of the local population both in displacement and in return. He reiterated the principle of the right to return in safety and dignity and stressed that the conflict could not be solved by means of force, and emphasized the importance of confidence-building measures, in particular in the Gali district. In this context, he reiterated the hope that obstacles to the planned verification of returnees to the Gali district would be overcome in the near future.

13. As suggested by the Group of Friends, who visited Georgia in May 2006 (see S/2006/435, para. 7), a fact-finding mission of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations visited Tbilisi, Sukhumi and the Gali and Zugdidi districts from 10 to 20 September to review the security and crime situation in the conflict zone and to identify possible steps to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement and cooperation between the sides. The report of the evaluation mission is currently being finalized.

III. Operational activities

14. The situation in the zone of conflict remained stable until 24 July, but became tense following the Georgian special operation in the upper Kodori Valley (see paras. 6-8 above). At the time of the writing of the present report, the situation remained volatile. However, throughout the reporting period the crime rate in the conflict zone remained comparatively low.

15. Following the initial reports of the impending Georgian special operation, on the night of 24 July a special UNOMIG patrol was launched to the CIS peacekeeping force checkpoint on the northern boundary of the security zone en route to the Kodori Valley. This patrol observed two Georgian armoured military rescue vehicles with five military personnel in the security zone and issued a violation report to the Georgian side for contravening the 1994 Moscow Agreement. A few hours later, on the morning of 25 July, the CIS peacekeeping force observed the movement of a Georgian military convoy comprising approximately 30 trucks,

4 jeeps and 18 four-wheel-drive vehicles with armed personnel estimated at 600 to 1,000 strong moving in the direction of the upper Kodori Valley. On 26 July, UNOMIG observed seven Georgian helicopters, including three attack helicopters, en route to the Kodori Valley and issued another violation report to the Georgian side. On 27 and 28 July, UNOMIG established two temporary observation posts in order to monitor movement to and from the upper Kodori Valley on a 24-hour basis (see para. 7 above). A subsequent partial withdrawal was followed by movement in both directions, including the rotation of armed personnel. The Georgian side has acknowledged the presence in the area of personnel of the Ministry of Interior, together with approximately 30 to 40 military engineers who are involved in the restoration of bridges. The presence of the latter, as well as the use of military assets, contravenes paragraph 2 (d) of the 1994 Moscow Agreement, on troop withdrawal from the Kodori Valley (see S/1994/583, annex I).

16. In response to the Georgian operation, the Abkhaz side deployed forces east of Sukhumi towards the lower Kodori Valley and in the zone of conflict, including the movement of additional units into the restricted weapons zone to restore defensive positions along the Gali canal and reinforce its posts in the zone of conflict. Those actions by the Abkhaz side, however, did not violate the 1994 Moscow Agreement.

17. The CIS peacekeeping force remained on a high state of alert throughout the operation, and continued to monitor the situation closely and exchange information with UNOMIG. It began to conduct regular patrolling to the so-called broken bridge, which separates the upper and lower Kodori Valley, where it noticed the presence of a new Georgian checkpoint on the upper side of the bridge. UNOMIG observers confirmed the presence of a Georgian checkpoint approximately 75 metres from the broken bridge. The Georgian side protested the firing of weapons by the CIS peacekeeping force, allegedly in the direction of the upper Kodori Valley. Since the deployment on 28 July of its observers near a CIS peacekeeping force checkpoint in the lower valley, UNOMIG has observed CIS peacekeeping forces practising live firing in the area, including with mortars, but not in the direction of upper Kodori Valley. The Mission recommended, however, that in the future such exercises be avoided.

18. After the high-level meeting on security issues on 24 January 2006 (see S/2006/173, para. 3), which established a regional coordinator mechanism to improve cross-ceasefire line communication and anti-crime cooperation between the sides, the weekly quadripartite meetings became a more effective mechanism, conducive to confidence-building between the sides. Improved exchanges of information on security matters and anti-crime activities, including between the respective law enforcement agencies, were largely responsible for a significant reduction in crime rates by mid-2006. Following the developments in the Kodori Valley, however, both the quadripartite meetings and cooperation between law enforcement agencies have been undermined by mutual accusations and militant rhetoric. This working-level mechanism almost ceased to function owing to the impact of the political climate after 25 July, but it did show signs of returning to normalcy at the very end of the present reporting period.

Gali sector

19. The overall security situation in the Gali sector was tense. During the period under review, two violations of the Moscow Agreement in the Gali area were issued

(see para. 7 above): the first on 30 July when Abkhaz de facto law enforcement agency personnel denied freedom of movement to a UNOMIG patrol at Akarmara in the security zone; and the second on 27 August when a similar incident took place at an Abkhaz observation post in the restricted weapons zone. Other increased activity, such as the deployment of personnel of the Ochamchira motorized rifle battalion for the restoration and reinforcement of defences along the Gali canal, did not violate the 1994 Moscow Agreement or subsequent relevant protocols since they took place outside the security zone. Despite a comparatively low level of criminal activity, some incidents of concern are being investigated, including a shooting incident on 17 August against armoured vehicles of a UNOMIG patrol near Nabakevi village in the lower Gali district, during which no UNOMIG personnel were harmed. In another incident, which took place on 8 August near the village of Repo Etseri, three persons were killed during an attempted abduction. Four killings, 13 shootings and 5 robberies were recorded during the reporting period.

Zugdidi sector

20. The Zugdidi sector was a main focus of activity during the reporting period as a transit zone for Georgian military vehicles and aircraft en route to the upper Kodori Valley through the Zugdidi security zone (see para. 15 above). Three shooting incidents, three robberies and two anti-smuggling operations were recorded during the reporting period.

Joint fact-finding group

21. During the reporting period, the joint fact-finding group, which is composed of representatives of the two sides, UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force, investigated and closed six cases, including four separate cases of killings in the Gali district between November 2005 and January 2006. The group presently has three cases under investigation, including the shooting incident against the armoured vehicles of a UNOMIG patrol (see para. 19 above) and two others awaiting closure.

IV. Policing issues

22. During the reporting period, the UNOMIG police component continued to operate only on the Zugdidi side of the ceasefire line, as the Abkhaz side continued to oppose the deployment of the UNOMIG police contingent in the Gali district. The police component conducted training in crime scene management and human rights awareness, for the first time in cooperation with local police trainers who had completed a train-the-trainer course in Estonia (see S/2006/435, para. 16). UNOMIG continued to implement the memorandum of principles on crime prevention, which had been concluded with the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti police force and the local administration. The Mission also finalized a documentary targeted at the local authorities and population, the diplomatic community, international organizations and non-governmental organizations on the mandate and achievements to date of the UNOMIG police component, which will be available in the Georgian, Russian and English languages. On 15 September, three female officers from the Zugdidi regional police force travelled to Canada to participate in the forty-fourth annual training conference of the International Association of Women Police. Their participation was financed by the Government of Finland and facilitated by UNOMIG.

V. Cooperation with the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States

23. During the reporting period, regular contact between UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force was maintained through exchanges of information and liaison visits at all levels and weekly quadripartite meetings. The CIS peacekeeping force and UNOMIG also conducted a joint rescue and emergency exercise in Gali. Cooperation with the CIS peacekeeping force included a prompt response to a request from UNOMIG for a helicopter for the medical evacuation of one of its military observers from the lower Kodori Valley and to the firing incident against a UNOMIG patrol (see para. 19 above). In addition, the CIS peacekeeping force provided significant assistance to the Mission's temporary observation posts (see paras. 7 and 15 above) and conducted operations to clear mines and defuse improvised explosive devices in the zone of conflict.

VI. Human rights and humanitarian situation

24. The United Nations human rights office continued to monitor the human rights situation and take measures to prevent and redress human rights violations in Abkhazia, Georgia. The office continued to develop human rights education and provided technical assistance to strengthen local capacities to protect human rights. It followed up on individual cases in areas of due process and the right to a fair trial; impunity; arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of detainees; freedom of movement; forced labour; arbitrary conscription; arbitrary evictions; and property rights violations. The office continued to make regular visits to detention facilities, provided legal advisory services to the local population and monitored court trials. In addition, in cooperation with local non-governmental organizations, it completed eight projects funded by the Government of Switzerland, including a phone line for detainees, free legal aid to the vulnerable, the establishment of a network of human rights resource centres for women and children, and an awareness campaign on domestic violence. Another project, funded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, helped bring together members of mixed Georgian-Abkhaz families separated by the conflict. The Abkhaz side has not yet agreed to the opening of a UNOMIG human rights sub-office in the town of Gali, which could enhance the Mission's ability to protect the human rights of the local population, including returnees, in the zone of conflict.

25. In implementing a de facto Parliamentary decree adopted in May 2006, the Abkhaz courts rejected new claims filed by owners who had abandoned their property since 1992 as the result of forced displacement caused by armed conflict and violence. The courts declared such claims inadmissible and discontinued ongoing procedures following judgements in favour of property restitution. This discriminatory practice could hamper the return and reintegration of displaced persons.

26. UNOMIG has commenced preparations for the rehabilitation of the hospitals in Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli, the tuberculosis hospital in Zugdidi and the Zugdidi city sewage treatment unit, which will be conducted through its quick-impact projects trust fund. The work will be conducted in advance of the expected commencement early next year of the second phase of the rehabilitation programme

funded by the European Commission, which will also include the rehabilitation of schools in the zone of conflict and the construction of the Lia police station in the Zugdidi district.

27. United Nations agencies and international and non-governmental organizations continued to assist vulnerable groups affected by the conflict on the Abkhaz side of the ceasefire line. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pursued its integrated area-based recovery programme; some 40 groups were formed and received inputs as part of the agricultural income-generation component. An agricultural youth programme was set up in eight schools in the Zugdidi district and nine schools in Abkhazia, Georgia. The implementation of three water rehabilitation projects for the urban areas of Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli continued. The activities of UNDP are funded by the European Commission and the Government of Norway.

28. UNHCR conducted a participatory needs assessment together with local non-governmental organizations, and continued its joint school rehabilitation and income-generating activities together with the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The United Nations Fund for Women launched an information network to advocate the inclusion of women's needs into ongoing reconstruction and development processes. The United Nations Children's Fund continued its extended programme of immunization and supplied district hospitals and rural medical points with medical equipment and supplies. It also provided communication materials on avian influenza to the educational system and began an initiative to supply safe drinking water to schools and medical facilities. The World Food Programme continued to provide food assistance to 70 patients in the Gulripshi tuberculosis hospital as part of an agreement with Médecins Sans Frontières, and prepared for the second phase of a school feeding programme.

29. The HALO Trust continued to clear the last of the minefields in the Ochamchira district. The district is expected to be declared free of mines by the end of 2006. The majority of the HALO Trust deminers are now working in the Sukhumi district and along the upper Gumista River, with personnel who were redeployed from operations in the lower Kodori Valley in the light of recent events.

30. The Danish Refugee Council continued its income-generating activities and provided start-up capital for community-based commercial enterprises and undertook repair of emergency shelters. The Norwegian Refugee Council rehabilitated two schools and continued its water and sanitation programme at six other schools. Save the Children continued its HIV/AIDS awareness training for health providers and began renovating the Sukhumi AIDS centre. It will implement the health training component of the UNDP programme funded by the European Commission. World Vision distributed medical supplies to health facilities, continued to provide support for 67 unschooled children in Ochamchira, extended its microcredit activities in Gali and Sukhumi, and continued its business and management education for the local university, local NGOs and district administrations. Première Urgence continued its agriculture income-generation activities, including the distribution of pesticides and agro-kits, and rehabilitation efforts on collective and individual housing in coordination with Médecins Sans Frontières and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

VII. Support issues

31. The Mission maintained its awareness campaign on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and continued to implement preventive measures and policies concerning zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse. No cases of alleged exploitation, abuse or sexual harassment were reported during the period covered in the present report. UNOMIG is now in the process of commencing an outreach programme for the local population by circulating posters in the community and advertisements in the local electronic and print media. The Mission also continued infrastructure repairs to key roads used by its military observers for patrolling the conflict zone, including a section of the main road between Sukhumi and Gali.

VIII. Financial aspects

32. The General Assembly, by its resolution 60/273 of 30 June 2006, appropriated the amount of $34.8 million for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNOMIG beyond 15 October 2006, the cost of maintaining the Mission would be limited to the amount approved by the General Assembly.

33. As at 30 June 2006, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNOMIG amounted to $13.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,265 million.

34. As at 12 September 2006, the amount owed for equipment costs totalled $142,362. Owing to the Mission's precarious financial situation, the reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment costs has been suspended since 1 October 2004 and continues to be in arrears.

IX. Observations

35. After expectations of a new momentum in the negotiation process were raised by the resumption of the Coordination Council and exchanges of proposals between the sides, a new and tense situation has emerged between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, in particular as a result of the Georgian special operation in the upper Kodori Valley. The Abkhaz side questioned the usefulness of attempting to reach further agreements in the framework of the settlement process, citing the introduction by the Government of Georgia of military forces into the Kodori Valley, despite its commitment under the 1994 Moscow Agreement to withdraw them. The de facto Abkhaz authorities insist on the resolution of the situation in the upper Kodori Valley as a precondition for the resumption of dialogue. For its part, the Government of Georgia has challenged the mechanisms of the settlement process with the de facto authorities in both Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia: its assessment is that the so-called status quo is increasingly detrimental to Georgia's vital and pressing interest in the recovery of its territorial integrity as well as the country's development at large. In this respect, the Government of Georgia considers that current mechanisms are ineffective and that the situation urgently calls for a restructuring of the settlement process around two basic principles, namely direct dialogue between the two sides and greater international involvement.

36. Those issues touch on some fundamental aspects of the settlement process. There is a risk that the already tense situation between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides will become more volatile. It is therefore of great importance for stability in the area that all sides show restraint and strictly observe their obligations under the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces as well as other relevant documents signed by both sides. On the basis of the experience of the recent events in the Kodori Valley, several issues are of special relevance, namely (a) the commitment by both sides to provide advance notification and full transparency in the movement of those pieces of military equipment and armed personnel that are permitted under the Moscow Agreement; (b) maintaining open channels of communication and dialogue; and (c) agreement on the modalities for the monitoring of the Kodori Valley.

37. Recent developments in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone and in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia highlight the threats that continue to arise from Georgia's so-called frozen conflicts. A negotiated solution for the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is undoubtedly difficult to reach today, as the positions of the two sides have grown further apart over the years on the question of political status. There is no alternative, however, to dialogue; the threat of force can only deepen existing mistrust, and a resumption of violence would be the worst possible outcome for the communities concerned and for the stability of the region and beyond. I trust that the Security Council, the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, whose role remains invaluable, and the international community at large will see in the setbacks of the past three months a reason to unite their efforts in support of a dynamic process that can rekindle hope on both sides of the ceasefire line, including among internally displaced persons, that a fair and lasting solution is achievable through peaceful means.

38. The developments during the reporting period have highlighted once again that the presence of UNOMIG remains essential for maintaining stability in the zone of conflict, promoting practical cooperation among the sides and facilitating progress towards a negotiated peaceful settlement of the conflict. I therefore recommend an extension of the mandate of UNOMIG for a further period of six months, until 15 April 2007.

39. In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my outgoing Special Representative, Heidi Tagliavini, for her leadership of the Mission and her vigorous efforts and sustained commitment on behalf of the peace settlement. I would also like to welcome my new Special Representative, Jean Arnault, and express my gratitude to him and to all UNOMIG staff for their tireless efforts in a difficult environment.

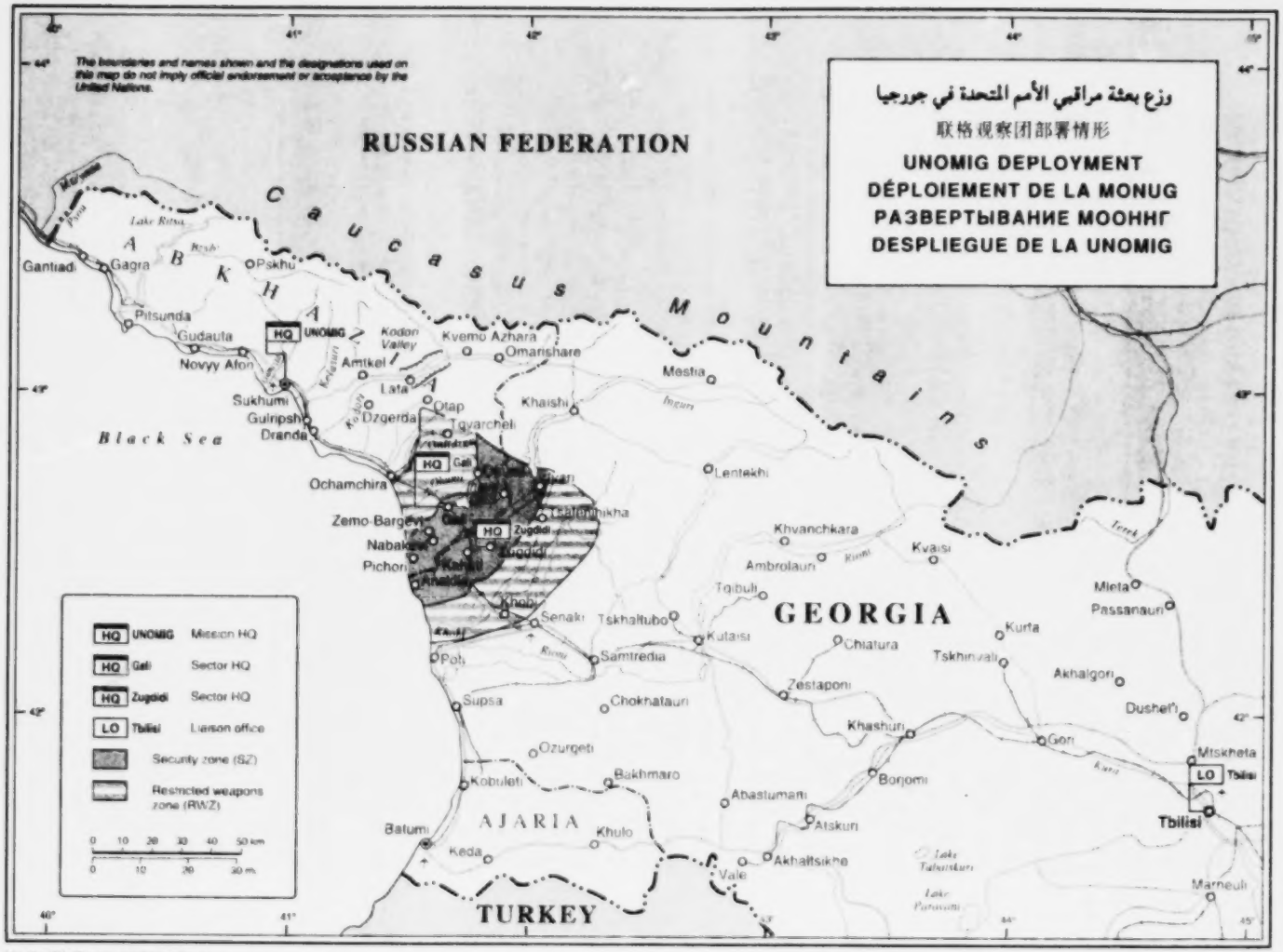
Annex

Countries providing military observers and police personnel (as at 26 September 2006)

Country	*Military observers*
Albania	3
Austria	2
Bangladesh	7
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	5
Denmark	5
Egypt	5
France	3
Germany	11
Greece	5
Hungary	7
Indonesia	4
Jordan	7
Pakistan	10[a]
Poland	5
Republic of Korea	8
Romania	2
Russian Federation	3
Sweden	3
Switzerland	4
Turkey	5
Ukraine	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	6
United States of America	2
Uruguay	3
Total	**121**

[a] Including the Chief Military Observer.

Country	*United Nations police personnel*
Germany	4
Ghana	1
Poland	2
Russian Federation	2
Switzerland	3
Total	**12**



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